



STATE OF WASHINGTON

STATE BUILDING CODE COUNCIL

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MINUTES BUILDING, FIRE AND PLUMBING CODES COMMITTEE

Date: June 10, 2009

Location: Seattle Area Pipe Trades, Seattle

Building, Fire & Plumbing Codes Committee Members Present: John Cochran, Chair; Tom Kinsman; Jon Napier

Building, Fire & Plumbing Codes Committee Members Absent: Ray Allshouse, Angie Homola, Dale Wentworth

Other Council Members Present: Jerry Mueller, Tien Peng

Visitors Present: Bob Eugene, Paul O'Connor, Eric Lohnes, Julie Nichols, Maureen Traxler, Kraig Stevenson, Michael Schoonover, Don Malatesta, Dave Cantrell, Mark Fallgatter

Staff Present: Tim Nogler, Krista Braaksma, Joanne McCaughan

CALL TO ORDER

John Cochran, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 3 p.m. John welcomed everyone. Introductions were made.

REVIEW AND APPROVE AGENDA

Tim Nogler asked to have "Existing Buildings" moved up to be part of the Building Code TAG report. With that change, the agenda was approved as modified.

Tim suggested that minutes from the May 6 and previous BFP Committee meetings be approved at tomorrow's Council meeting.

TAG REPORTS

Building Code TAG

John Cochran said since nothing new has happened since the May meeting of the Building Code TAG, discussion today will be about existing buildings.

Tim Nogler called attention to a handout entitled, “Proposed Amendments to the 2009 International Existing Building Code (IEBC). In the middle of page 1 is a new section, Section 3401.5. This section appears in the 2009 IBC, correcting an erroneous reference. The original proposal was to strike this section. However, after review, the TAG recommends retaining Section 3401.5. This section permits using the 2009 IEBC as a compliance alternative, when requested by the permit applicant.

Tim said the proposed amendments were thoroughly reviewed by the Structural Engineers Association, as well as the IEBC TAG. Jon Siu is a member of that TAG and a member of the IEBC ICC committee. The TAG recommendation is to move the 2009 IEBC with the proposed amendments forward to public hearing.

Motion #1:

Tom Kinsman moved that the Building, Fire and Plumbing Codes Committee recommend forwarding the 2009 IEBC with the proposed amendments to public hearing. Jon Napier seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously adopted.

Tim asked for a motion, at the Committee’s pleasure, for repeal of WAC 51-19, the Historic Building Code. He said a notice of intent has been filed for the repeal. As discussed earlier, the intent of the repeal is to use the IEBC, Chapter 11, for historic buildings. Doing so is supported by the historic preservation community.

Motion #2:

Jon Napier moved recommending repeal of WAC 51-19. Tom Kinsman seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously adopted.

Fire Code TAG

Jon said the Fire Code TAG finished its work yesterday. It reviewed 10 code change proposals, many of which were proposed by the TAG. Nine of those 10 were approved as submitted, and one proposal was withdrawn. Proposals which the Committee previously reviewed include fire extinguishers, Group E sprinkler systems, lockdown and shelter-in-place and Chapter 45 references. Six new proposals that the TAG recommends for approval as submitted, not yet seen by the Committee include:

- 10-04 This proposal requires property owners and their authorized agents to apply for certain permits. The IFC is a construction document for a small number of permits. The language in this proposal is similar to what is in the IBC; it aligns the IFC and IBC.
- 10-05 This proposal deals with the maintenance of commercial kitchen hoods. The intent is to clarify how commercial kitchens are cleaned, inspected and maintained. It references Chapter 11 of NFPA 96 as a recognized standard. Only Chapter 11 is referenced, to avoid conflict with the International Mechanical Code.
- 10-06 Dealing with lockdowns and shelters-in-place, this proposal adds a new section in Chapter 9. It clarifies alerting systems, so occupants can hear and understand the procedures correctly. It parallels national procedures.
- 10-07 This proposal exempts Type I hoods installed in R-2 occupancies licensed by the state of Washington. It was requested by the Department of Health because of conflicts with local jurisdiction about what constitutes a commercial operation. The TAG approved this proposal and referred it to the Mechanical TAG for further review. Tim suggested setting this proposal aside while deciding how to proceed.
- 10-08 This proposal grants an exception to Chapter 38, allowing the storage of 20 lb. LPG cylinders on decks and balconies. This cleans up previous language that allows the use of barbeque grills on decks and balconies.
- 10-09 This proposal is basically housekeeping, correlating and reorganizing existing building requirements in the last section of the fire code. It corrects some changes between the 2006 and 2009 codes regarding means of egress. It also changes the applicability of the fire code to the scope identified in 2006.

Regarding existing amendments reviewed by the TAG, 15 were retained, 12 were modified, and seven were deleted because they were incorporated into the base code. Jon said significant changes were made in Chapter 4, which is unique to Washington State because of state legislation, and in Chapter 46, dealing with marinas.

The Fire Code TAG also reviewed and proposed some amendments to the Wildland Urban Interface Code. Most changes were administrative, deleting “shalls” to allow flexibility to builders and code officials. Two appendices were adopted to increase usability of the code. Access and water supply requirements in Chapter 4 were moved to the fire code for consistency of application. Most local jurisdictions currently have access and water supply requirements in their local codes.

Jon said there was a minority report about a Chapter 5 ignition resistance construction table, filed by the Building Industry Association of Washington, a homebuilders association and a landowner. Jon acknowledged Table 503.1 may prevent some homes from being built at the precise location desired, if they’re in a nonconforming, defensible space without a conforming water supply. However he said they may be built at other locations on the same pieces of property.

Tom asked about possible legal repercussions. John Cochran said there are nonbuildable lots. Tim relayed comments made by the fire marshal and building department in Kittitas County. They said they would be able to figure out how to make a location work. He said Table 503.1 has one area, with extreme hazard and no water supply, where a house couldn't be built. Tim noted that the WUIC is proposed to be an appendix to the IFC, available for local rather than statewide adoption.

Eric Lohnes, BIAW, noted that builders want to be able to create some sort of an environment where there's flexibility and people aren't in a position where they can't build on their property.

Jon said the TAG recommendation is to move the WUIC as an appendix to the fire code for potential adoption by local jurisdictions.

Motion #3:

Jon Napier moved to accept the recommendations of the Fire Code TAG and forward them to the Council, for consideration of rulemaking and public hearing. Tom Kinsman seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously adopted.

Plumbing Code TAG

Krista Braaksma said the Plumbing Code TAG reviewed 11 code change proposals. Three proposals were referred by the Energy Code TAG for concurrence on plumbing issues, dealing with water heater/space heater combo efficiency rating, heat recovery for service hot water, and domestic hot water meters. The two TAGs concurred on the first two proposals and disagreed on the third. The Plumbing Code TAG recommends disapproval of the proposal requiring individual domestic hot water heaters for all R-2 occupancies.

Krista said three proposals were recommended for adoption, two as submitted and one as modified. One proposal was withdrawn. Five were disapproved. On two disapproved proposals, dealing with fixture setting and shower sizing, the TAG is recommending amendments to the International Residential Code (IRC) instead.

In addition, the TAG reviewed 52 existing state amendments. Of those, 45 were recommended for retention, three for deletion because they were adopted into the base code, one for modification because of changes in the 2009 UPC, and three for modification because of proposed code changes this cycle.

The TAG recommends modifying Section 601 to make it consistent with the building code and residential code requirements for providing hot water at fixtures.

The TAG also looked at changes made to Chapter 16, gray water requirements. The UPC had standard and scope in Part II to include other types of rain water, rather than gray water. After review, the TAG recommends adding a Part III to Chapter 16 with specific rain water harvesting system guidelines. It recommends adoption of the guidelines the Council drafted in 2002.

Tom asked Krista to repeat what she said about #233 and #232. Krista said for shower stalls, the IRC requires a minimum 900 inch area, while the UPC requires a minimum 1,024 inch area. For toilet spacing, the IRC requires a 21-inch clear space in front of the fixture, while the UPC requires a 24-inch clear space. The Plumbing Code TAG preferred amending the IRC to the plumbing code requirements.

Dave Cantrell, Seattle/King County Public Health, said he was the proponent on these two, as well as a member of the TAG. His aim was to get some consistency between the two codes. He clarified that, for a toilet, it would be the difference between three inches clearance in front. The side clearance doesn't change. It's 21 versus 24.

For a shower, basically you're talking the difference between a minimum in the International codes. The IRC allows a 30x30 minimum square area, 900 square inches, as opposed to basically a 30x34 area.

Because it's not a life safety issue, Dave thinks the lower number would suffice. Pictures in the IRC are also helpful; it contains a diagram that has presented a problem. However if the direction of the Committee is to change the IRC, Dave highly recommends that they change the drawing rather than just point to the UPC, because there is no drawing in the UPC, and people always see the diagram.

Motion #4:

Jon Napier moved to accept the recommendations of the Plumbing Code TAG and forward them to the Council. Tom Kinsman seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously adopted.

Residential Code TAG

Tien Peng said since the last Committee meeting, the TAG has spent the majority of its time debating the residential fire sprinkler issue. After review, the TAG adopted Code Change Proposal #09-211, as submitted. This proposal deletes the requirement for fire sprinklers in the 2009 IRC and makes their use a local adoption option. Tien said a couple of other proposals also make fire sprinklers voluntary by placing that requirement in an appendix.

A minority report from Todd Short, representing Washington Fire Chiefs, was filed in opposition to #09-211, eliminating fire sprinkler requirements in Section R313 of the IRC. He said IRC TAG action adopting that proposal is contrary to the Council's previously stated position that the fire sprinkler issue should be dealt with at the national level.

Tien said other proposals that the TAG recommends moving forward include:

- #09-175, stairway illumination is clarified to require that these lighting devices receive their primary power from building wiring.

- #09-193, amending the definition of bed and breakfast by adding “owner- occupied dwellings with five or fewer guest rooms.”
- #09-225, not using stud wall cavities and joist spaces as ducts, because they leak.
- #09-226, adding an exception to have ventilation openings in the crawl space to be 1/1500 of the under-floor area.
- #09-227, clarifying the plumbing code about overflow drains and scuppers.

One code change proposal, #09-210, was withdrawn.

As far as existing amendments, Tien said the TAG recommends moving 17 forward. Many of them are administrative. Four existing amendments were recommended for deletion.

Tim added that a proposal for unvented attic assemblies was adopted by the Council with a July 1, 2010 effective date. Thus that code change proposal is treated as an existing amendment to be retained. He said it will be filed as part of the public hearing document.

Jon asked to discuss the fire sprinkler issue, because he was unable to attend Residential Code TAG meetings. Tim said Code Change Proposal #228 was proposed by Dave Cantrell to allow a prescriptive method of installing multipurpose fire sprinkler systems in certain dwellings. It is proposed to be adopted as Appendix R of the IRC.

Jon asked if there was TAG discussion about using “shall” in the requirement to voluntarily install automatic fire sprinkler systems in townhouses and one- and two-family dwellings in accordance with Appendix R. He said fire sprinkler systems are much more difficult to install in dwellings in rural areas on wells. Tien said there was discussion of that issue. He said it was decided that changes in technology will eventually solve the problem. Jon said some water purveyors may refuse to install multipurpose systems because they fear a potable water issue. He questioned requiring voluntary systems to be multipurpose. Tien said it’s optional.

Dave Cantrell, Seattle-King County Public Health, said multipurpose systems are an option; they aren’t mandated. Jon asked if Appendix R mandates multipurpose systems. Dave said designed systems under 13D can be used or multipurpose systems using a prescriptive method. He added that another proposal, Code Change Proposal #09-190 by Tom Phillips, allows voluntary sprinklers per the NFPA standard. All are included in Appendix R as options.

Tim said Tom Phillips, a TAG member representing WABO, proposed mandatory fire sprinkler systems in one- and two-family townhouses as an appendix chapter available for local adoption. Another proposal from builders proposed voluntary installation, using Appendix R to reference Section 2904, which is not adopted as part of the IRC. The third proposal is by Dave Cantrell to adopt Section 2904 as part of the IRC.

Jon asked if the three fire sprinkler proposals are being moved singly or as a group. Tim said the IRC TAG moved them forward as a group. Jon asked if they were reorganized into one. Tim said all three were adopted, #190 as submitted #211 as submitted, and #228 as modified. Jon asked what the vote was on approval of #211. Tien said there is a minority report on that proposal. Tim said he believes it was four to one.

Motion #5:

Tom Kinsman moved Committee adoption of the IRC TAG recommendations, including Section R302. Jon Napier seconded the motion, with reservation, to move the proposals to public hearing.

It was noted that R302 is included in this motion.

Jon spoke against referring to residential fire sprinkler systems as “voluntary.” Tom said he prefers a discussion about whether or not to use “voluntary” during the public hearing. Eric Lohnes said the spirit of the question is to keep the installation of fire sprinkler systems voluntary versus mandatory. Jon said in code language, the spirit is stated in the intent section. He said there may be application problems, because there are code required sprinkler systems in Washington for mitigation and other purposes. Eric said there was sufficient sentiment in the TAG to move it forward. Jon said the minority report was authored by the fire department, which enforces sprinkler applications. Kraig asked for clarification that use of “voluntary” is limiting in some instances, such as grade. There was agreement that it’s limiting.

Amendment to Motion #5:

Jon Napier moved to delete “voluntary” from Code Change Proposal #211. The amendment died for lack of a second.

The question was called for on Motion #5. The motion was unanimously adopted.

Jon clarified that the Fire Code TAG didn’t move Log 10-07 forward. It had intended to move that proposal to the Mechanical TAG, but that TAG had concluded meeting. That proposal was deleted from the motion to adopt TAG recommendations.

Jon said the TAG also reviewed SSB 5561, relating to the installation of carbon monoxide alarms. Tim has drafted proposed language that will be inserted into the IFC primarily and into the IBC and IRC secondarily. Tim said existing dwellings are required to have carbon monoxide alarms by January 1, 2013, except for owner-occupied detached single-family dwellings. Upgrades are required upon sale of the dwellings.

Motion 6:

Tom Kinsman moved the carbon dioxide proposals forward. Jon Napier seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously adopted.

Tim said the IRC TAG has other issues to review, including Chapters 4 and 6, foundations and braced walls, at future meetings.

Jon thanked staff, specifically Joanne McCaughan, for her help with the TAG, particularly during lively discussions.

ADJOURNMENT

Lacking further business, John Cochran adjourned the meeting at 4:25 p.m.